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**What is “Action Research?”**

According to the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/drugfree/sa3act.htm),

"Action research is inquiry or research in the context of focused efforts to improve the quality of an organization and its performance. It typically is designed and conducted by practitioners who analyze the data to improve their own practice. Action research can be done by individuals or by teams of colleagues. The team approach is called collaborative inquiry." In other words, it is a process where start with a problem or pose a question, you gather information, come up with a possible solution, put the solution in action, reflect on whether or not the solution worked, and you repeat.

**Problem:**

I’ve worked in day care centers, after school programs, and summer programs for many years. Throughout the years, I’ve encountered parents who are deeply involved in their child’s education, some that are partially involved and some that aren’t involved at all. Even now as a teacher, I still deal with this issue. I have dealt with parents who I’ve never met, never return phone calls or respond to letters, and parents who have never attended an open-school night. I have also had the opportunity to work with parents who constantly check up on their child’s progress, who attend school trips, who provide supplies for the class when needed and who volunteer on a regular basis. The question that always comes to mind is whether or not parental involvement is linked with student success in reading. Do students with parents that are involved do better in reading than those whose parents aren’t?

**Is it researchable?**

I’m almost positive that with research, I will be able to find studies and statistics on this topic. This is an interesting topic especially when you go into socioeconomic status.

**Prior Research? Name at least two sources.**

**Learning Continues at Home**

**Abstract**: The article reports that the parent involvement is critical to student success, based on the research conducted by Anne Henderson and Nancy Berla. It is said that one of the goals set by the U.S. Department of Education is the promotion for partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children. According to Joyce Epstein, co-director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, there are different types of involvement that include Parenting, Volunteering, and Learning at Home. It is suggested that there should be a two-way communication to achieve school-home partnerships.

Schumacher, B. (2000). Learning Continues at Home. *Montessori Life*, 12(2), 35-36

**Planning Ahead: The Relationship Among School Support, Parental Involvement, and Future Academic Expectations in African American Adolescents.**

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to identify the social supports in the lives of African American adolescents that influence resilient academic outcomes. The authors examined 206 African American students to identify the role of parental involvement as a buffer in the relation between low school support and high academic expectations. Results revealed that high levels of school support and parental involvement facilitated the development of high academic expectations. Sex and socioeconomic status (SES) differences were also examined. High parental involvement and high SES positively influenced academic expectations for females only. For males, low parental involvement and high SES positively influenced academic expectations. These findings suggest that parental involvement has differing effects on academic outcomes for African American males and females.

Trask-Tate, A., & Cunningham, M. (2010) Planning Ahead: The Relationship Among School Support, Parental Involvement, and Future Academic Expectations in African American Adolescents. *Journal of Negro Education*, 79(2), 137-150.

**Pros and Cons: Name at least two sources.**

The website Surf Net Parents (<http://www.surfnetparents.com/pros_and_cons_of_parent_involvement-6015.html>) and Public School Review (http://www.publicschoolreview.com/articles/12) provides pros and cons for parental involvement.

**Current Instructional Strategies? Name at least two sources.**

Since I am just starting my research, I do not know of any current instructional strategies yet.

**Practitioners/Theorists? Name at least two sources.**

**Bakhtin**

Bakhtin, M. M. (1990a). Art and answerability. In M. Holquist & V. Viapunov (Eds.), Art and answerability. Early philosophical essays by M.M. Bakhtin. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

**Epstein**

Epstein, J. L. (1994). Theory to practice: School and family partnerships lead to school improvement and student success. In C. L. Fagnano & B. Z. Werber (Eds.), School, family and community interaction: A view from the firing line. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

**What is your proposed intervention? (Independent Variable). Name at least one source.**

I would like to ask my students’ parents about their opinions on the topic of parental involvement. I would like to know whether or not they think that parental involvement plays an important role in student success. I would also like to find out more about their backgrounds such as their personal experience with their parents growing up or level of education. My goal is to find out why parents aren’t involved. I would like to use some of the strategies and others provided on the website Council for Exceptional Children (http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=6257&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CAT=none).

**How will you define (construct) and measure your intervention? (Dependent Variable)**

As a 1st grade teacher, I can compare parental involvement in my class against parental involvement in other 1st grade classes. I can compare the methods used to get parents involved, the number of parents who show up to open school night, how many parents respond to letters/phone calls, how many parents do homework with their children and sign it, how many parents go on trips etc.